

ZONING CHANGE REVIEW SHEET

CASE NUMBER: C14H-2008-0027 **HLC DATE:** August 25, 2008
September 22, 2008
October 6, 2008
PC DATE: December 9, 2008

APPLICANT: Historic Landmark Commission

HISTORIC NAME: Texas Blind, Deaf and Orphan School Gymnasium and Auditorium

WATERSHED: Colorado River

ADDRESS OF PROPOSED ZONING CHANGE: 7201 Levander Loop

ZONING FROM: P-NP to P-H-NP

SUMMARY STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff does not recommend the proposed zoning change from public, neighborhood plan (P-NP) district to public – Historic Landmark – neighborhood plan (P-H-NP) combining district zoning with the adoption of a compromise solution to preserve the framework and the gymnasium, construction of an entry arch commemorating the architecture of the auditorium, and the installation of an interpretive historical plaque commemorating the history of the site and the school.

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION ACTION: August 25, 2008: Initiated the historic zoning case. September 22, 2008: Postponed the case to a specially-called meeting on October 6, 2008 for a full Commission. October 6, 2008: Recommended historic zoning for the gymnasium and auditorium only. Vote: 7-0.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION: Recommended historic zoning for the gymnasium and the auditorium and a study to determine the feasibility of adaptive re-use of the buildings. Vote: 8-0.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The buildings are not listed in any city survey. The former East Campus of the Texas School for the Deaf are addressed in the Govalle/Johnston Terrace Combined Neighborhood Plan (2003) under several goals and objectives:

Public Lands

Former Texas State School for the Deaf Property (now owned by City of Austin)

This property is now owned by the City of Austin through the Health and Human Services Department. A large portion of the northern part of this site is affected by a power line that runs through the property. This power line constitutes a significant impediment to development of this part of the property.

Neighborhood stakeholders suggested that if it was possible to re-route these power lines that this site might be appropriate for residential development. Residential

development that was affordable and available to local families is supported by this plan.

If it is not possible to re-route the power line, other suggestions for this property were recreational uses including:

- Playing fields – since the cessation of soccer on the “informal” field at Oak Springs, there is a lack of places for soccer in this area. A baseball diamond was also mentioned as another form of playing field that would be appropriate;
- Small walking trail;
- Playground. (p. 47)

Goal 15: Protect and enhance existing parks, recreational facilities, and open spaces.

- Achieve and maintain a healthy, sustainable, robust, functional, and aesthetically beautiful parks and green space system within the planning area.
- Establish and maintain equity in the distribution of funds for parks and public facilities.
- Preserve and enhance existing parks and recreational facilities.

Goal 17: Provide opportunities for cultural arts, recreation and leisure activities/services for all ages.

Goal 18: Design public facilities and open spaces that serve as community gathering places. (p. 73).

CITY COUNCIL DATE: December 18, 2008

ACTION: Passed on first reading only for historic zoning of the gymnasium and auditorium buildings.

November 19, 2009:

ORDINANCE READINGS: 1ST 2ND 3RD

ORDINANCE NUMBER:

CASE MANAGER: Steve Sadowsky

PHONE: 974-6454

NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION: Johnston Terrace

BASIS FOR RECOMMENDATION:

The gymnasium and auditorium at the former East Campus of the Texas School for the Deaf were built in 1959 and are therefore not yet 50 years old. They are located on city-owned property which is being developed as the new city animal shelter. Staff requests greater consideration of the potential for adaptive re-use of these buildings as the last remaining buildings on what was established as the Texas Blind, Deaf and Orphan School for African-American youth in 1959, and which later became the East Campus of the Texas School for the Deaf after integration of the facility.

Architecture:

The gymnasium is a Quonset-styled building with exposed metal exterior arches and glazing in the arch of the roof. The auditorium features a 1950s-1960s modern design. The primary material on both buildings is brick. The modern style of these buildings reflects the work of Houston architects George Rustay and Foy Martin, who also designed many modern-styled houses in Houston in the late 1950s and early 1960s as well as the Calhoun County Court House in Port Lavaca, Texas, which has a similar architectural philosophy of clean lines, modern materials, exposed means of construction, and geometrical shapes.

Historical Associations:

The former East Campus of the Texas School for the Deaf was established in 1959 as the Blind, Deaf and Orphan School, an African-American institution, and was built on the site of the former Montopolis Drive-In Theater at what was then 601 Airport Boulevard. The Blind, Deaf and Orphan School was combined with the Texas School for the Deaf in 1965 with integration, although African-American students were still housed at the East Campus and bused to the main campus of the School for the Deaf on South Congress Avenue.

The auditorium was named in 1989 for J.C. McAdams, Jr., a prominent African-American educator and superintendent of the Blind, Deaf and Orphan School from 1951 until its integration in 1965. McAdams had a long career in education, having attended the Hampton Institute in Hampton, Virginia and being one of the first African-American students at Colorado State University. His father, J.C. McAdams, Sr. (1860-1940) was also a prominent educator, having graduated from Fisk University in Nashville, and teaching in segregated schools in the Shelbyville area of Tennessee. The 1900 U.S. Census shows J.C. and Lizzie McAdams living in Bedford County, Tennessee (Shelbyville), where he was listed as an African-American teacher. Prior to coming back to Tennessee, from 1896-1898, the elder McAdams was the principal of the Fessenden School, an African-American institution near Ocala, Florida. In addition, the elder McAdams also apparently served as principal of the Union School in Martin, Florida from 1897 to 1898. Around 1928, either the older or the younger McAdams was a teacher at the Hardeman County Training School in Tennessee; it is unclear to whom the reference is made, since both men were actively teaching in segregated schools at that time, although it would appear that it was J.C. McAdams, Jr., as his father was teaching in Shelbyville, Tennessee at that time. The younger McAdams then moved to Crockett, Texas, and finally to Austin, becoming superintendent of the Blind, Deaf and Orphan School here.

The buildings on the former East Campus were designed by the Houston architectural firm of Rustay & Martin (George Rustay and Foy Martin). George Rustay had previously been associated with noted Houston architect Joseph Finger, who designed many civic, institutional, organizational, commercial, and religious buildings in Houston and surrounding cities. After Finger's death, Rustay joined Foy Martin; they designed civic and commercial buildings, including the Calhoun County Court House in Port Lavaca, Texas. Wylie Vale joined the firm in the early 1960s; the expanded firm designed the Matagorda County Court House in Bay City, Texas. In addition to their commercial and civic buildings, the firm also designed a large number of modern 1960s residences throughout Houston.

PARCEL NO.: 02001801020000

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: Abstract 22, Survey 29, J.C. Tannehill (44.45 acres)

ANNUAL TAX ABATEMENT: Exempt

APPRAISED VALUE: The entire tract is valued at \$1.9 million; there is no value ascribed to the improvements on the property.

PRESENT USE: Vacant

CONDITION: Fair

PRESENT OWNER:

City of Austin Real Estate Division

P.O. Box 1088

Austin, Texas 78767

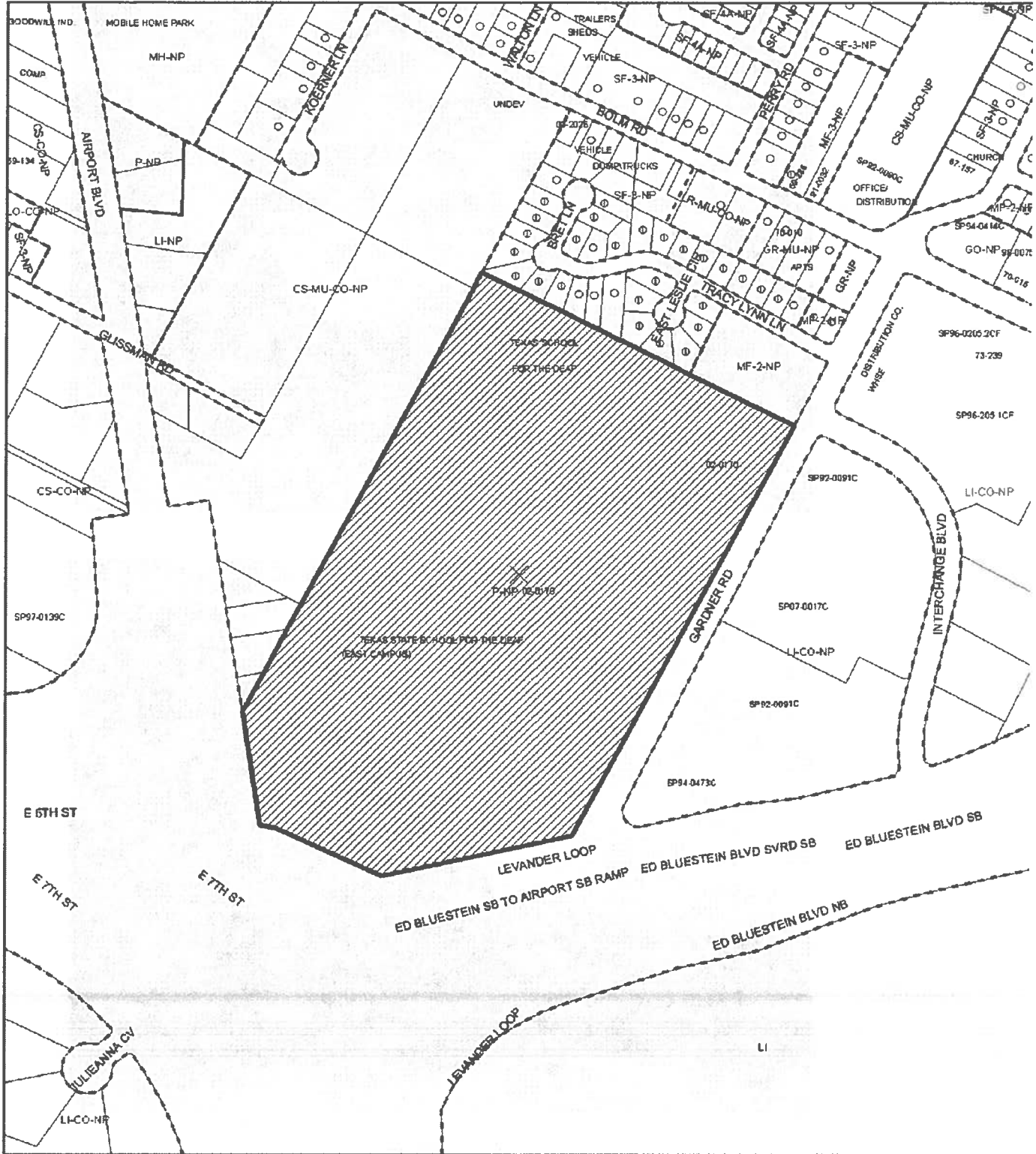
DATE BUILT: ca. 1959


ALTERATIONS/ADDITIONS: None apparent.


ORIGINAL OWNER(S): State of Texas (1959)


OTHER HISTORICAL DESIGNATIONS: None.


LOCATION MAP





 **SUBJECT TRACT**

 **ZONING BOUNDARY**

 **PENDING CASE**

OPERATOR: S. MEEKS

1" = 400'

HISTORIC DEMOLITION PERMIT
ZONING CASE#: HDP-2008-0438
ADDRESS: 7201 LEVANDER LOOP
SUBJECT AREA: 0.000 ACRES
GRID: L21 & M21
MANAGER: S. SADOWSKY



This map has been produced by GIS Services for the sole purpose of geographic reference. No warranty is made by the City of Austin regarding specific accuracy or completeness.



Gymnasium



Details of gymnasium



J.C. McAdams Auditorium

State of Texas
519 Oscar Robinson Tract
Unplatted

601 Airport, Blvd.

Masonry School Bldg.

74423 10-20-59 \$1,156,448

Stokes Construction Co.

MASONRY SCHOOL BLDG.

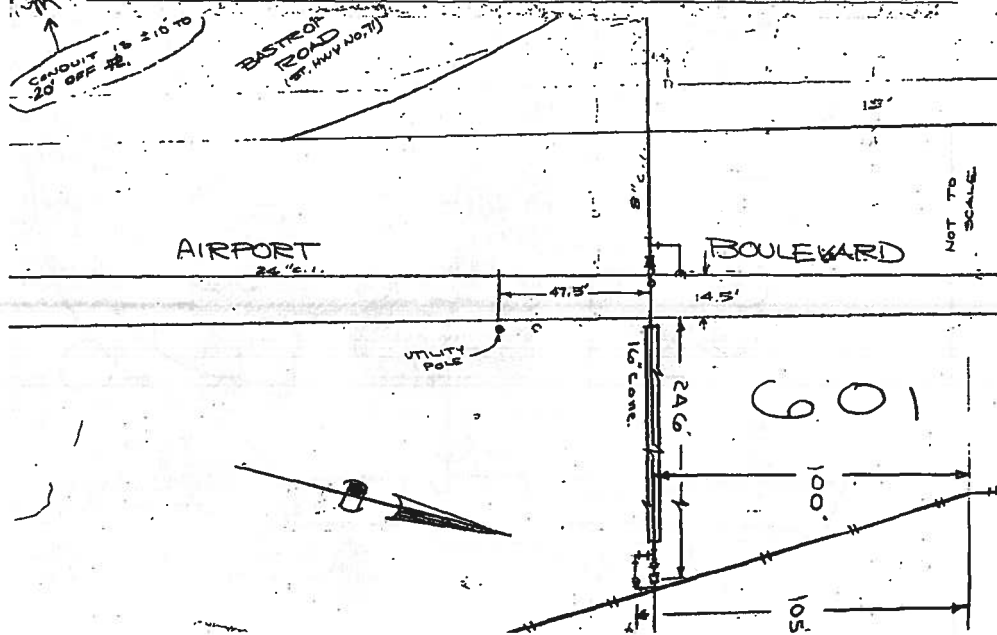
Building permit for the construction of the school campus - 1959

519
EVERY METER OF WATER SERVICE PERMIT
Municipal Sec 51 Austin, Texas
No. 26034
INDEXED

Received of: State of Texas Date: 4-1-60
Address: 601 Airport Blvd.
Amount: Three Hundred Sixty Nine Dollars, 360
Plumber: C. J. Penner Size of Tap: 6"

Date of Connection	5-29-60
Size of Tap Made	6"
Size Service Made	6"
Size Main Tapped	9"
From Front Prop. Line to Curb Cock	246'
From Prop. Line to Curb Cock	100'
Location of Meter	So. P. L.
Type of Box	
Depth of Main in St.	3'
Depth of Service Line	3'
From Curb Cock to Tap on Main	
Checked by Engr. Dept.	A.P.H. 7-5-60

No. Fittings	Size
1	7.16" F.I.
1	5.24" 4"
1	Cop. to Iron el.
1	Cop. to Cop. el.
1	Cop. to Iron Coupling
1	Cop. to Cop. Coupling
1	Stop 6" X 6" X 4"
1	Bushing
1	Ripples
1	Stop
1	Valve
1	Meter Box
1	Lock Lid
1	Drain Tile
1	Drain Tile Lid
1	Stop & Drain
1	Job No. W. 323-711-500
1	Foreman: P. J. ...



Water service permit - 1960



GENERAL NOTES:

1. REFER TO THE "PHASE 1" AND "PHASE 2" DEMO SITE PLANS FOR THE LOCATION OF OTHER BUILDINGS.
2. ALL WORK SHALL BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CITY OF AUSTIN, TEXAS, ORDINANCES AND SPECIFICATIONS.
3. THE CONTRACTOR SHALL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR OBTAINING ALL NECESSARY PERMITS AND APPROVALS FROM THE CITY OF AUSTIN, TEXAS, AND THE TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES.
4. THE CONTRACTOR SHALL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PROTECTION OF ALL UTILITIES AND STRUCTURES TO REMAIN.
5. ALL DEMOLITION SHALL BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH, REGULATIONS AND SPECIFICATIONS.
6. THE CONTRACTOR SHALL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE REMOVAL OF ALL HAZARDOUS MATERIALS AND THE PROVISION OF APPROPRIATE DISPOSAL RECORDS TO THE TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES.
7. THE CONTRACTOR SHALL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PROTECTION OF ALL ADJACENT PROPERTIES AND THE PROVISION OF APPROPRIATE SAFETY MEASURES.
8. THE CONTRACTOR SHALL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PROTECTION OF ALL PUBLIC UTILITIES AND THE PROVISION OF APPROPRIATE SAFETY MEASURES.
9. THE CONTRACTOR SHALL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PROTECTION OF ALL HISTORIC STRUCTURES AND THE PROVISION OF APPROPRIATE SAFETY MEASURES.
10. THE CONTRACTOR SHALL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PROTECTION OF ALL ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES AND THE PROVISION OF APPROPRIATE SAFETY MEASURES.

EXPLANATIONS:

1. DEMOLITION OF BUILDING

2. DEMOLITION OF ROOF

3. DEMOLITION OF WALLS

4. DEMOLITION OF FLOOR

5. DEMOLITION OF CEILING

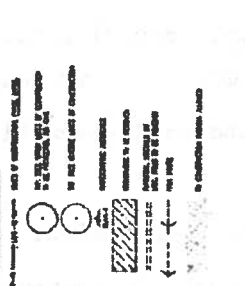
6. DEMOLITION OF MECHANICAL

7. DEMOLITION OF ELECTRICAL

8. DEMOLITION OF PIPING

9. DEMOLITION OF STRUCTURAL

10. DEMOLITION OF OTHER



PROJECT NO. 7801-2008-0010
 CASE NUMBER: 7801 LEANWORLD LOOP
 ADDRESS: 7801 LEANWORLD LOOP

GENERAL NOTES - SEE PHASE 1:

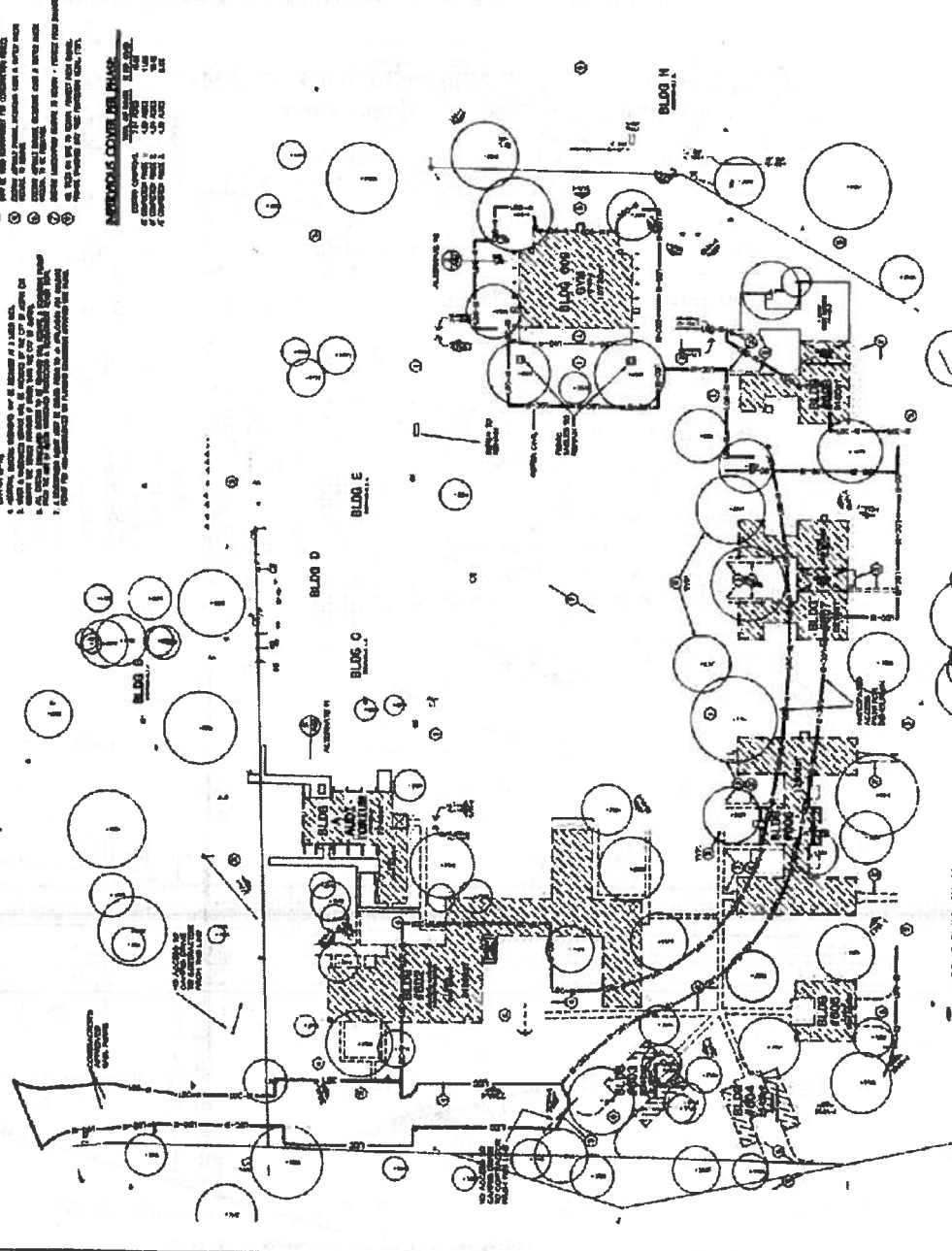
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GENERAL NOTES - SEE PHASE 2:

1. ALL WORK SHALL BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CITY OF AUSTIN, TEXAS, ORDINANCES AND SPECIFICATIONS.
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GENERAL NOTES - SEE PHASE 3:

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THE HANDBOOK OF TEXAS **Online**

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TEXAS BLIND, DEAF, AND ORPHAN SCHOOL. The Texas Blind, Deaf, and Orphan School, a charity-sponsored institution for black children, was located on a hundred-acre tract on Bull Creek Road between 38th and 45th streets, about four miles northwest of the Austin business district. It was established as the Deaf, Dumb, and Blind Institute for Colored Youth in 1887 by the Eighteenth Legislature. A \$50,000 appropriation was made to buy land and to construct appropriate buildings; the board of trustees included H. E. Shelley, J. T. Fulmore, and William M. Brown.^{qv} Seventeen pupils and two teachers were present for the opening of the school on October 17, 1887. The initial campus consisted only of an eleven-room residence, but in 1888 a new two-story brick building was added to provide more classroom and dormitory space. In 1919 the school was placed under the jurisdiction of the newly created Board of Control.^{qv} Various additions and renovations took place during the next several decades; by the 1940s the school had twelve brick buildings and one stone building, including dormitories, classrooms, hospital, superintendent's residence, and dining room. Instruction at the accredited high school emphasized training in trades and industries. Among the courses offered were manual labor, broom making, mattress making, shoemaking and repair, tailoring, cleaning and pressing, cooking, sewing, rug making, and other handicrafts. The hospital furnished surgical, medical, dental, and nursing services; specialists for eye, ear, nose, and throat ailments were employed part-time. Some poultry and farm products were raised each year for the home's own use.

When the State Colored Orphans' Home^{qv} was combined with the institute in 1943, the name of the facility was changed to Texas Blind, Deaf, and Orphan School. The school was moved to 601 Airport Boulevard, the former site of the Montopolis Drive-in Theater, in 1961, after the legislature appropriated \$1.5 million for the construction of eleven buildings to accommodate the 1,208 students. The school was placed under the jurisdiction of the Texas Education Agency^{qv} in 1965, and its name was changed to Texas Blind and Deaf School. It was combined with the Texas School for the Deaf^{qv} later that year. The campus of the former Texas Blind and Deaf School served as the East Campus facility of the Texas School for the Deaf, and housed programs in early childhood and elementary education, as well as the department for multihandicapped deaf students. In 1989 the legislature appropriated money for the renovation of the School for the Deaf's South Campus, and plans were made to move all of the programs to the new facilities once the construction was completed. In the early 1990s no decision about the future use of the East Campus facility had been made.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Vertical Files, Austin History Center. Vertical Files, Barker Texas History Center, University of Texas at Austin.

James W. Markham

The following, adapted from the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th edition, is the preferred citation for this article.

Handbook of Texas Online, s.v. ","

At Texas School for the Deaf 75000 (1960)

Integration Of Special Schools Told

Am. St. 10-3-65
By DERRO EVANS

Education Writer

A group of 260 children who are among the city's youngest but most faithful commuters has brought about the peaceful integration of classrooms at the state's special schools this fall. This is the report from John Grace, director of special schools.

Each morning a bus leaves the school for the Deaf in South Austin, taking 100 white children to attend classes with Negro children at the School for the Blind and Deaf on Airport Boulevard.

The bus returns with 100 Negro children who study each day at the School for the Deaf.

Meanwhile another bus is taking 60 Negro children from Airport Boulevard to participate in the day's classes at the School for the Blind in North Astin.

Grace terms the transition "very smooth," adding, "I know of no incidents among children, teachers, house parents, employes or anyone."

Integration of living facilities at the three schools is scheduled

for Sept. 1, 1965 Grace said. By that date a \$338,000 building and renovation program will be completed at the three schools, Grace said. The funds were appropriated by the 59th Legislature.

The added facilities will permit the special schools to enroll "40 to 50" additional children, Grace predicted.

Enrollment at the three schools this year is 975, including 80-day students who live at home in Austin. About 200 Negro children live at the School for the Blind and Deaf.

Grace assumed the newly created post of director of special schools on Sept. 1 after 11 years as superintendent of the School for the Deaf.

Other new members of Grace's administrative team this fall are John Best, who came from the Idaho School

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for the Blind to be superintendent of the School for the Blind here, and Albert W. Douglas, promoted to superintendent of the School for the Deaf after 11 years as principal.

THE HANDBOOK OF TEXAS **Online**

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TEXAS SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF. The Texas School for the Deaf was established by the legislature in 1856 as the Texas Deaf and Dumb Asylum. Governor Elisha M. Pease^{qv} appointed a board of five trustees and instructed them to find a site for the school. The trustees rented a fifty-seven-acre tract, a half mile south of the Colorado River in Austin, that had a two-room cottage, three log cabins, and an old smokehouse that could be made over for a school room. The school opened with three students in January 1857, and at the end of the first summer only eleven students had enrolled. Rather than being discouraged at the low enrollment, teachers at the school felt that it would quickly increase once a railroad to Austin was completed. Superintendent Jacob van Nostrand and the board of trustees asked for funds to begin construction of a carefully designed campus. In response, the 1858 legislature appropriated \$5,000 for the purchase of the rented property, for minor improvements and additions to the existing buildings, and for the construction of two frame buildings to serve as school and living quarters. During the Civil War^{qv} the school had no money for salaries; teachers and students supported themselves by farming and by making clothes from the wool of the sheep that they raised. A total of sixty students attended the school during its first thirteen years.

A change in the law in 1876 allowed the governor, rather than the board of trustees, to appoint the school's superintendent. The two superintendents who served during this period were Henry E. McCulloch and John S. Ford.^{qv} Neither man had special knowledge of teaching or of the deaf; nevertheless, they each took genuine interest in the school's well-being. They fought, though with little success, for higher salaries for teachers. In spite of a high turnover rate among the faculty, the school made good progress in areas such as vocational instruction. Among other new programs, the school's first monthly publication *The Texas Mute Ranger*, forerunner of the *Lone Star*, was established in 1878. In 1883 the legislature gave the power to appoint the superintendent back to the trustees in an effort to make the position less political.

A substantial building program, begun in 1875, continued under McCulloch and Ford and was completed in the late 1880s. In 1893 the method of instruction at the school was changed from a strictly manual form of communication to a combined manual and oral system, and an oral department was instituted to give students a chance to develop any residual speech ability they might have. A deaf-blind department was organized at the school in 1900 and was maintained until 1934, when it was transferred to the Texas School for the Blind.^{qv} In 1919 the legislature established the Board of Control^{qv} and placed it in charge of overseeing the school's administration. By 1923 the Texas facility was reported to be the second-largest school for the deaf in the country. It had 450 students in the mid-1940s and offered courses in a variety of trades, in addition to academic instruction. Acoustic work for children with residual hearing was instituted as part of the academic training. In 1949 control of the school was given to the new Board for Special Schools and Hospitals, and the name of the facility was changed to the Texas School for the Deaf. The school had gone by this name informally for years. Tensions rose, however, because the school was still categorized as an eleemosynary institution rather than an educational one. Students and teachers alike resented the

stigma that society attached to "charity cases." In 1951 the legislature reclassified the school and placed it under the jurisdiction of the Texas Education Agency.¹⁷ The school claimed the distinction of being the oldest public school in continuous operation in the state. Beginning in 1955 several of the old buildings on campus were razed, and a completely new physical plant was built. The School for the Deaf merged with the Texas Blind, Deaf, and Orphan School¹⁸ in 1965. The two facilities were integrated during 1966, and the Blind, Deaf, and Orphan School became the East Campus of the School for the Deaf. The East Campus housed the school's programs in early childhood and elementary education, as well as the department for multi-handicapped deaf students.

In 1981 the Texas School for the Deaf became an independent school district and was also made a state agency. It served as a resource center for other deaf-education programs in the state, offering inservice training for teachers and staff, onsite testing programs, and conferences on various subjects in order to help raise the level of instruction for the deaf in both public and private schools. Also in 1981 Victor Galloway became the school's first deaf superintendent. In the late 1980s the school had 400 students, eighty of whom were day students; the rest lived on campus in cottage environments. The school received accreditation from the Texas Education Agency and from the Conference of Executives of American Schools for the Deaf. In contrast to the days when deaf children were taught only certain crafts and trades, society had begun to accept that the deaf could make significant contributions. Careers in such fields as computers, teaching, and law were becoming available, and between 40 and 60 percent of the school's graduates went on to attend a college or technical school. In 1989 the legislature appropriated funds for extensive renovation of the South Campus. The school planned to move all of its programs to the South Campus once the construction was completed but had made no decision about the future of the East Campus facility. Other superintendents of the School for the Deaf include William Addison Kendall (1887-95), T. A. Rose (1895-99), B. F. McNulty (1899-1905), Gus Urbantke (1913-19), Felix B. Shuford (1919-23), T. M. Scott (1923-39), E. R. Wright (1939-44), John F. Grace (1949-65), A. W. Douglas (1965-72), and Virgil Flathouse (1974-80). In 1987 Marvin Sallop became superintendent.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: William Wallace Blackburn, *Evolution of the State School for the Deaf from an Asylum to an Accredited School* (M.Ed. thesis, University of Texas, 1958). University of Texas at Austin LBJ School of Public Affairs, *Guide to Texas State Agencies* (Austin, 1956-). Vertical Files, Barker Texas History Center, University of Texas at Austin.

Vivian Elizabeth Smyrl

The following, adapted from the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th edition, is the preferred citation for this article.

Handbook of Texas Online, s.v. "<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/TT/kct26.html>" (accessed August 18, 2008).

(NOTE: "s.v." stands for sub verbo, "under the word.")

The *Handbook of Texas Online* is a project of the Texas State Historical Association



Marvin B. Sallop
Executive Director

Austin History Center

Texas School for the Deaf

1102 South Congress Avenue

P.O. Box 3538

Austin, Texas 78764

(512) 440-5300

September 8, 1989

Ms. Audrey Bateman
Austin-Travis County Collection
810 Guadalupe Street
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Ms. Bateman:

The Texas School for the Deaf respectfully requests your presence and participation in honoring the memory of two respected and notable leaders in the field of deaf education in Texas. On October 7, 1989, the Texas School for the Deaf will dedicate and name school buildings in memory of Jack H. Hensley and J. C. McAdams.

The South Campus library will henceforth be known as the Jack H. Hensley Library. Mr. Hensley graduated from TSD in 1939, as salutatorian, and later taught at the school for 30 years. He retired in 1984. He was a central figure in the deaf community, both personally and through his involvement in many local, state and national organizations. He was graduated from Gallaudet University and earned a Master of Educational Psychology from the University of Texas.

The East Campus auditorium will be named after J. C. McAdams for the many contributions he made in the field of civil rights and education, including serving as superintendent of the Texas Blind, Deaf and Orphan School from 1951 until 1965, when the campus at 601 Airport Boulevard became part of the unified Texas School for the Deaf. He received a B.S. in Agriculture from Hampton Institute, Hampton, Virginia and was one of the first blacks to graduate from Colorado State University, where he earned a master's degree in agriculture education.

Bronze plaques depicting the naming of the Jack H. Hensley Library and the J.C. McAdams Building will be unveiled during morning ceremonies at the two locations. Funds for these plaques will be raised privately. We invite you to participate with us in acknowledging these respected leaders through your tax-deductible donation to the TSD Dedication Fund, c/o Public Information Office, P. O. Box 3538, Austin, Texas 78764. A Dedication Fund Account has been established in the school's Business Office where all expenses for the dedication will be paid. An acknowledgement and official receipt will be mailed to you directly.

The enclosed articles which appeared in the TSD Lone Star will give you a brief overview of the many contributions and leadership both men provided to generations of deaf Texans. The dedication of these buildings is a small symbol of the esteem, admiration, respect and love we can offer for the many years of dedicated service both men provided to this school and countless students.

"An Equal Opportunity Employer"

J.C. McAdams

J.C. McAdams, age 88, of Austin, died Thursday.

Special services will be held Tuesday, at the Texas School for the Deaf, East Campus, 601 Airport Blvd. 7:00-8:00 PM. Funeral services, 3:00 PM, Wednesday, Wesley United Methodist Church, burial Evergreen Cemetery.

Obituary of J.C. McAdams
Austin American-Statesman, September 20, 1988

MEMORIES



J.C. McAdams

J. C. McAdams, who died September 15 in Austin, will long be remembered for the many contributions he made as superintendent of the Texas Blind, Deaf and Orphan School.

He was superintendent at the school from 1951 until 1965, when the all-black campus at 601 Airport Boulevard became part of the Texas School for the Deaf.

Friends and colleagues of McAdams say he was a man they will never forget. They tell many stories about his leadership, his sense of humor, and his dedication to his students.

When McAdams arrived at the Texas Blind Deaf and Orphan School on Bull Creek Road in 1951, the school needed extensive interior and exterior renovation. McAdams brought about a complete change in the management of the school through extensive policies and controls.

The home economics department was remodeled with stainless steel St. Charles kitchens - the latest style. Opal Washington, now retired from the Texas Agricultural Extension Service, went to the school and presented special demonstrations in cooking, sewing, crafts, money management, and personal grooming.

McAdams wanted students to have the opportunity to learn as many skills as possible. Former principal, William McConnell, recalled that training was offered in cosmetology, upholstery, fashion, and dry cleaning. Agriculture agents worked with students on a gardening program.

McAdams also began an Austin tradition - the planting of running roses on the fences of state property. The idea later caught on at other state properties, said former teacher Mrs. Eddie Langdon, but McAdams was first.

Staff meetings were upbeat and educational, Langdon recalls. McAdams loved reading *The New York Times* and best sellers; he asked her to do book reviews for staff meetings. He was always open to discussion and differences of opinion, she said. Langdon, who taught music to young blind children, went to the School for the Blind, along with the blind students, when the Airport campus became part of the Texas School for the Deaf in 1965.

The all-black school had moved from the Bull Creek Road facility to Airport Boulevard in 1960. Paul Smith, recruited by McAdams to be his Business Manager, said McAdams was effective and persuasive in working with his board and the Legislature. Jess Irwin, Jr. said McAdams secured the legislative appropriation for the property to build a school at the Airport location and was instrumental in its design.

Irwin, who worked for the Legislative Budget Board, often saw McAdams in action. He said that when McAdams dealt with the legislature, he had a sense of humor, but "he also had a sense of what he needed to do to carry out his responsibilities."

Others recall that McAdams had a unique ability to size people up, to know whether they would work with him. He was so keen that he could recognize people's voices, who they were, who they were with, and probably the last time he saw them.

McAdams kept in contact with members of the Legislature, knew them personally, and knew where their districts were located. Lloyd Nelson, who worked in the Business Office at the school on Bull Creek Road, remembers McAdams' ability to form coalitions and cooperative situations for the school. "He got just about everything he wanted from the Legislature because of this unique talent," Nelson said. Nelson added that McAdams was an energetic, dynamic man. He had an open door policy to his staff, and he loved the children and knew many of them personally.

McAdams provided a father image to the children, and was there whenever someone needed him. When the school showed movies in the auditorium, he popped the popcorn. When hula hoops were popular,

Austin History Center

he bought boxes of them for all the children. McAdams was able to accomplish so much because he was interested in the welfare of the children. "He worked, he stayed on the job all the time," Irwin said.

Mrs. Washington said McAdams was a "hardworking man, a go-getter. He left no stones unturned. There were many things the students could not do without. He pushed for equal facilities for all," she said. "He really made opportunities available for a lot of people who would not otherwise have had them."

McAdams was among the giants in education, said Bill Whitt, Dean of Academic Affairs at Durham Nixon Clay Business College. "He was the finest schoolman, regardless of race, that I ever met," he said. Whitt shared an office with McAdams when McAdams went to work at the Texas Education Agency in 1966. When they would go to a school district to investigate a situation, McAdams could get the information he needed in about five minutes. "He'd shell them down like he'd shell an ear of corn," he said.

Wherever they went, people recognized McAdams because they'd seen him speak, not once but usually four or five times. He traveled the state, speaking at graduations and at churches.

McAdams was an eloquent speaker, said Lee Wilburn, assistant commissioner for instruction for the state when McAdams was a consultant, before his years as superintendent. "He knew his subject, he knew the people and he knew what he was talking about," Wilburn said.

The two visited schools in every part of the state, making sure facilities were up to state standards. Their friendship continued during the years McAdams was superintendent. When Wilburn and his wife moved to a new house, McAdams arrived with a four-foot pecan tree.

McAdams was an excellent gardener, growing things when no one else could. He had worked in agriculture before his work in education. He was one of the first blacks to graduate from Colorado State University, where he earned a master's degree in agriculture education.

In his 88 years, McAdams worked in three careers: in agriculture, in education, and in the integration of schools across Texas. Though he encountered prejudice in his work, McAdams kept a positive attitude. "If there ever was a man that was not prejudiced, it was J. C. McAdams," Whitt said.

Representative Wilhelmina Delco gave the eulogy

at the services for McAdams, calling him a God-fearing man "who lived God's word." McAdams' father was born a slave, and against all odds, became one of the first black lawyers in the State of Tennessee. He provided his son with the values and mental strategies for "becoming an overcomer. J. C. McAdams, Jr. became a man for his times," she said. "Although he lived most of his life in a hostile segregated society, he developed his full potential and became a trailblazer, showing others the way."

McAdams was first and foremost a family man. He worked as a team with his wife, Inez McAdams. She died in 1957 and he never remarried. McAdams is survived by a daughter, Bettye Joanne McAdams of Austin.

The Editorial Staff of the Lone Star would like to thank the following individuals who provided invaluable personal and professional insights on the life and work of J. C. McAdams which enabled us to produce this story: to TSD staff Nancy Hawkins and Charles W. Horton Jr.; to former colleagues, Opal Washington, Jess Irwin, Jr., Mrs. Eddie Langdon, Lloyd Nelson, Bill Whitt, Lee Wilburn; William McConnell; Willie Lee Glass; and Paul Smith; to Rep. Wilhelmina Delco; and especially to Ms. Bettye J. McAdams for sharing her father's personal records and her private thoughts as only a loving daughter could.

"Miss Mary"

Former TSD houseparent, Mary Henrietta Derstine, 80, died August 10, 1988 at an Abilene hospital.

"Miss Mary", as she was affectionately called, worked at the Texas School for the Deaf and Blind from 1942 until her retirement in 1973. She served as a houseparent on South Campus, working mainly in the football and volleyball cottages during her tenure at TSD. She later worked part-time as a substitute houseparent until she was 79. She was a member of Central Presbyterian Church of Austin.

"Miss Mary" was born in Merkel, Texas and graduated from Merkel High School. She attended Simmons College. She is remembered by TSD staff as a wonderful, lovable person who loved to knit and embroider during her off-hours. "Miss Mary" was a conscientious and dedicated employee, oftentimes working many hours without additional pay.

Although she never married, "Miss Mary" was devoted to the needs of other people within the TSD community and the larger Austin area. She loved the young students on South Campus but still found time to volunteer at the Austin Senior Citizens program providing many hours to assisting older citizens who could not otherwise help themselves.

A dear and devoted employee of TSD will be greatly missed.

Memorial to J.C. McAdams – Lone Star, date unknown (1988)

John C. McAdams

M, b. October 1860, d. December 1940

Last Edited	23 May 2002
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Birth*	October 1860
Marriage*	Principal= Lizzie H. (?)
Death*	December 1940
Burial*	December 1940, Willow Mount Cemetery, Section B, Shelbyville, Bedford County, Tennessee, United States, Gravestone states: "J. C. McAdams Oct 1860-Dec 1940. Graduated from Fisk University, BA 1883, MA 1886. Prof. in MS state schools 8 yrs, Principal in Shelbyville Public Schools, 36 yrs; admitted to practice law in the courts of the State." His infant son, John Newton, is buried next to him.

McAdams, John C. (Prof.), 80, Dec 12, 1940, pg 5, Prof. John C. McAdams colored educator and lawyer. daughter; Joanna McAdams McDonald of Chicago. Son: J.C. McAdams Jr of Crockett TX. Buried in Willow Mt.

Information on John C. McAdams, Sr., the father of J.C. McAdams, Jr. for whom the auditorium was named.

THE HANDBOOK OF TEXAS **Online**

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FINGER, JOSEPH (1887-1953). Joseph Finger, architect, was born on March 7, 1887, in Bielitz, Austria, the son of Hani (Steifter) and Henri Finger. Finger received his primary, secondary, and technical education in Bielitz. Immigrating to the United States in 1905, Finger settled initially in New Orleans. He moved to Houston in 1908, where he worked in the branch office of the Dallas architect C. D. Hill and Company. In 1912 Finger became the junior partner of Houston architect Lewis Sterling Green. Between 1914 and 1919 he was in partnership with James Ruskin Bailey and from 1920 to 1923 with Lamar Q. Cato. From 1923 to 1944 Finger practiced under his own name. From 1944 until his death he was in partnership with George W. Rustay. From the beginning of his first partnership, Finger was identified with the design of office, hotel, retail, and industrial buildings. He was responsible for the American National Insurance Company^{qv} Building in Galveston (1913, demolished); the Ricou-Brewster Building in Shreveport, Louisiana (1924, with Seymour Van Os); the De George (1913), Plaza (1925), Ben Milam (1925), Auditorium (1926), and Texas State hotels in Houston (1929); the Vaughn Hotel, Port Arthur (1929); the Charlton Hotel, Lake Charles, Louisiana (1929); and the McCartney Hotel, Texarkana (1930). Finger designed retail stores for Everitt-Buelow (1926, altered), Levy's (1930, altered), and Battelstein's (1923, 1936, 1950) in Houston, and numerous auto showrooms in Houston during the 1920s. He was architect of the Model Laundry, Galveston (ca. 1913); and the Cheek-Neal Coffee Company (1917), Texas Packing Company (1924), H. M. Tennison Manufacturing Company (1925), and Truscon Steel Company (1941) buildings in Houston.

As the city's foremost Jewish architect from the 1910s through the 1940s, Finger designed many Jewish institutional buildings, as well as buildings for individual Jewish clients. Among these were Congregation Beth Israel^{qv} Temple (1925), Congregation Beth Israel Mausoleum (1935), and Congregation Beth Yeshurun

Synagogue (1949), as well as the Concordia Club (1915, demolished) and the Wolff Memorial Home (1930, demolished). During the 1930s Finger was responsible for such major public buildings as the Montgomery County Courthouse, Conroe (1935, altered); Jefferson Davis Hospital (1937, with Alfred C. Finnqv); Houston City Hall (1939); and the Houston Municipal Airport Terminal and Hangar (1940). At the time of his death, Finger and Rustay's Harris County Courthouse (1953) was under construction in Houston. Finger was best known for his exuberant modernistic designs. These included the Art Deco-style Houston Turn-Verein (1929, demolished), the A. C. Burton Company auto showroom (1929, demolished), and the Barker Brothers Studio (1930). Finger's office produced the Clarke and Courts printing plant (1936) and the Carnation Company creamery (1946-47, demolished) in the streamlined modernistic style. Finger's public buildings of the 1930s and 1940s were also designed in the modernistic style. Among the prominent clients for whom Finger designed multiple buildings, for both personal and business use, were the industrialist Henry M. Tension, the confectioner W. H. Irvin, the merchant Philip Battelstein and his sons, the grocer Joseph Weingarten^{qv} and his brothers, and the oil operator James M. West and his sons and business associates.

Finger married Gertrude Levy of Houston on June 18, 1913. They were the parents of one son, Joseph Seifter Finger, a landscape architect and golf course designer. Finger was a member of the American Institute of Architects. He was also a member of Congregation Beth Israel, the Independent Order of B'nai Brith, the Houston Turn-Verein, the Westwood Country Club, Chamber of Commerce, and the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks. Joseph Finger died on February 6, 1953, in Houston. He is buried in Beth Israel Mausoleum in Beth Israel Cemetery, Houston.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Emory A. Bailey, *Who's Who in Texas* (Dallas: John B. McCraw Press, 1931). Ellis A. Davis and Edwin H. Grobe, comps., *The New Encyclopedia of Texas* (2 vols., 1925?; 4 vols., 1929?). *Houston Post*, February 7, 1953. Natalie Ornish, *Pioneer Jewish Texans* (Dallas: Texas Heritage, 1989). Yolita Schmidt, *The Moderne Style in Architecture: A Houston Guide* (Houston Public Library, 1978).

Stephen Fox

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Last Updated: January 17, 2008
Please send us your comments.

Biography of Joseph Finger, George Rustay's early partner (prior to designing the East Campus of the Texas School for the Deaf)

Member Rank:



Group: Members

Posts: 3

Joined: Wednesday, May 9th, 2007

From: City of Katy

Member No.: 3,949

Ben,

this is beautifully done! Our home is located in Katy, and Wylie Vale was the architect. I contacted him a few years ago when it was listed on the NRHP...below is the information he gave me to include in that paperwork. He was a very kind man, still passionate about his work and offered to design an addition for me. It wasn't necessary, these homes are timeless and beautiful and need little improvement... Vale designed 5 or 6 houses out here, gave me probably the same list he gave you...I was sorry to see that so many of his addresses are now occupied by new construction. Regardless, below are some of his thoughts...about our home and his designs in general...

Traveling through California in the 1940s, architect Wylie W. Vale witnessed the new trend first-hand, and he consciously began incorporating Ranch style elements in his designs. In a November 2002 interview, Mr. Vale explained what aspects of the style

<http://www.houstonarchitecture.info/haif/index.php?showtopic=10882>

8/20/2008

Article on Wylie Vale, a later partner of George Rustay

A Brief Guide to the Work Of Wylie W. Vale. - Houston Architecture Info Forum - Ho... Page 15 of 30

most appealed to him. He felt that the rambling, angular plans could be better fit to the site, with a low-lying profile and less ostentatious effect. He preferred natural materials with warm, earthen colors and textures instead of applied decorative ornamentation. The materials should also be durable, however, and require minimal upkeep. For these reasons, he especially liked stone and woods with natural preservatives like cypress and redwood.[13]

Vale also wanted his homes to be livable and inviting. He often incorporated shaded entry loggias that welcomed visitors with protection from the weather. Large expanses of operable windows were a must, with projecting bays that added intrigue to the design. Interiors were also made warm and inviting with natural materials, especially wood paneling of beautifully grained pine, ash, walnut or cypress with soft, rich wiped finishes. In addition to its beauty, the paneling was affordable, practical and permanent. Vale also used durable, natural flooring materials, typically polished stone in heavy traffic areas and pegged, random-width wood floors throughout most major rooms. Ample built-in furniture including bookcases, desks, chests and dressing tables, along with spacious closets, made the spaces more useful and comfortable. Spacious kitchens open to informal dining areas were also an important feature to Vale, as was a massive dominating brick or stone chimney, properly designed for non-smoking fireplaces.[14]

While many of these features are characteristic of Ranch style homes built across the country, Vale also managed to maintain some of the look and feel of Texas' traditional vernacular dwellings. Although the form of the Woods House is distinctly modern, the rough-cut stone and cedar shake roof lend the home a more rural, hand-built character. Even the open, angular plan retains some traditional elements. For instance, the kitchen was placed in a semi-private wing, contrasting the more modern arrangement of the kitchen at the house's core. With this unique blend of modern forms and the subtle retention of traditional design elements, Vale's own label for the style, "Contemporary Country," could not be more appropriate.

User Rank:



Group: Members

Posts: 542

This will go out in the Houston Mod Newsletter very soon, but I'll post it here tonight while I'm thinking of it.

Jason

The sometimes overlooked Houston based architect, Wylie W. Vale, came up in conversation on the Houston Architecture Information Internet Forum recently.

Interest in a Vale designed home recently for sale led people to wonder what other

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houses he built. Little has been written on the many buildings Vale designed. Some internet digging led me to the world renown molecular biologist named Wylie Vale. I was correct in assuming that this was the architect's son, and in an email Wylie Vale Jr. confirmed to me that his father is still alive and well in Austin, TX and would love to meet an architecture enthusiast such as myself. Time for a road trip! My wife, Vanessa, and I drove to Austin equipped with questions provided by Rice University Architecture Professor, Stephen Fox. Over homemade cookies and lemonade Mr. Vale graciously answered our questions.

Q: When and where were you born?

A: I was born in Marceline, Missouri in 1913. Walt Disney was also from Marceline.

Q: Who were your parents and what did they do?

A: My father, George W. Vale, was head of the Interstate Congress Committee of Accounts in St. Louis.

Q: Where did you grow up and what was your education?

A: After living in Marceline as a child, we moved to Houston when I was in high school.

Q: What made you want to become an architect?

A: Looking at all the comics in the Central Presbyterian Church inspired me to learn more about architecture.

Q: Where and when did you study architecture?

A: I studied at Rice with Staton Nunn and Willie Ward Watkin in the 1930s.

Q: What influences were you exposed to during your architectural education?

A: My Third Grade teacher taught me the foundation of every subject so that it was a joy to learn. I don't know what I would have been without her. Staton Nunn at Rice was a big influence on me. Another big influence came when I was in the Navy during WW II, and while my ship was being repaired, I would walk around San Francisco and look at architecture. The wide eaves on the houses there stayed in my head.

Q: Who did you work for once you got out of school?

A: My first job after graduating in 1939 was with Moore and Lloyd in Houston. I began as a draftsman with them. After Pearl Harbor I enlisted in the Navy.

Q: When did you begin your own architectural firm? How long were you in practice?

A: After WW II. I was a practicing architect until just a few years ago, over 50 years.

Q: What were some of your early buildings?

A: One of my early residences was for a friend in Brookshire, TX. That led to other houses there and in Katy. These side jobs gave me the impetus to go out on my own.

Q: Were you especially identified with any particular architectural trends and styles, any part of the city, and any particular building types (such as houses, institutional buildings--schools, churches, hospitals--retail, office buildings)?

A: My style was called Contemporary Country. My wife was an interior designer and we developed the style together. I would design the house and she would help the clients design the interiors. It was homey, practical, and comfortable. I liked to use wide open windows before air-conditioning became widely available. I used oak plank flooring, natural stone, and linear stone.

Q: What do you regard as your most important buildings?

A: My most important building was the Matagorda County Court House in Bay City, TX. I designed Spring Branch High School, the first public school with air-conditioning in Houston. I obtained many contracts for schools because I was able to keep costs down. I designed St. Luke's Children's Heart Center with my partners, George Rustay and Foy Martin. I also received a lot of press for the Michael Halbouty House and Offices on Westheimer (energy company located where the Galleria now stands).

Q: What buildings did you design outside of Houston?

A: The Christ for the Nations Campus in Dallas and the Court House in Bay City along with the early residences.

Q: How did your architectural practice change over time?

A: In 1960 I came to know the Lord and my life changed. I continued to design residences, churches, and schools, but I also volunteered helping ministries such as designing the Christ for the Nations campus in Dallas.

Q: Did you have any partners? Who were some of your employees?

A: George Rustay and Foy Martin were my partners. I chose to work with them because they were Christian. I had other offers to work with more famous architects, but felt more comfortable having Christian partners. I felt like I could really depend on them.

Q: Who did you regard as the most interesting architects practicing in Houston during the period you were professionally active?

A: I was friends with Karl Kamrath and worked with him on the River Oaks Country

Club. I was grateful to Moore and Lloyd. Mace Tungate was an architect who was the best man at my wedding. John Staub and Cy Morris were other architects I had a lot of respect for. But between school boards, church, and work, I didn't have time for AIA, so I never got to know that many architects.

Q: When did you retire from practice?

A: I retired 2 years after moving to Austin in 2001.

Q: What have you done since you retired?

A: I have been volunteering for Pricilla and Aquilla Ministries for poor widows and children since 1960 and that has been very satisfying.

With these questions answered, the incredibly humble and sharp minded 94 year old gentleman showed us around the house he lives in now with his wife and daughter and their family. He told us about his son being awarded an outstanding alumnus award from Rice University and showed us some family portraits including a very memorable one of himself in the 1950's posing with a pipe. He also gave me a series of maps with general locations of houses he designed (the maps had no addresses, but he said they would be contemporary houses). On our way back to Houston, Vanessa and I talked about how inspiring it was to talk to one of the men who made Houston what it is. Though many of his houses have been demolished, many more remain. Favorites of mine include The Townsend House on Knollwood St. and The Raymond Schindler House on Westlane Place, both in River Oaks.

Since this interview, quite a lot more research and photography has been done by Ben Hill, a University of Houston student and budding architectural photographer. Ben and I also spent a day in the Memorial area trying to locate as many of the houses on the maps as we could, with mixed results. Please visit the HAIF message boards for more information and photographs of Vale's work.



**Calhoun County Court House, Port Lavaca, Texas
Designed by Rustay & Martin (1959)**



**Matagorda County Court House, Bay City, Texas
Designed by Rustay, Martin & Vale (1965)**